1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Uru *warige* should carry game and honey for the men of Morane and Unapane.

Some of the village Veddas of those days had cloth, and when dancing to the *yaku* they wore the long cloth garment called *kangalla*; the wilder Veddas had no cloth and wore leaves, but it was not clear whether they had not also a certain amount of bark cloth which was their ordinary covering, and leaves may have been worn in addition when they invoked the *yaku*[1].

The old man knew of the custom of a man keeping a piece of human liver in his betel pouch; it was universal and in his young days every Vedda desired to have a piece. Strangers, even Veddas, who intruded on the hunting grounds would be killed and their liver taken, no other part of the dead man being used, and the custom gave rise neither to warfare nor to vendettas[2].

Caves in which a death occurred were deserted, the corpse being covered with leaves; perhaps men very near dissolution were left before death had actually occurred, but this did not seem certain. Bones found in the cave when the group returned to it after an interval of some ten or twelve years were thrown away quite carelessly. The spirits of the dead became the Nae Yaku who, with Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka, gave game and prosperity. The *kirikoraha* ceremony was performed for the Nae Yaku, and *adukku* (cooked food), which even in the old days consisted of coconut and rice, was offered to them. The wilder Veddas gave nothing to the Buddhist priests and made no offerings at shrines, nor did they know the Kataragam God, Kanda Swami, though the village Veddas worshipped him and knew that Walliame had been taken to wife by him, and honey was presented to the goddess at certain shrines, especially one at Kokote Sila, frequented by the village Veddas.

A few of the village Veddas would dance for the Sinhalese in order to protect their cattle, bring prosperity to their villages, and secure them from epidemics; they would dance *kolamaduwa* which the old man pointed out was derived from a

[1] Cf. p. 213.
[2] For details of this custom see Chapter VIII.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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shorter ceremony *ruwela*, this being an older name than *kolamaduwa*[1].

It appeared that the invocations at present in use among the Kovil Vanamai Veddas were those used in the old man's youth, for although he had not, as he stated (truthfully we believe), been closely associated with the Veddas for many years he recognised a number of Vedda invocations which were sung to him, as identical with those sung in his youth, and named the occasions on which each was used. *Maligi* was recognised as sung when honey was taken; the invocation at the beginning of the *kirikoraha* ceremony (cf. p. 285) was promptly named, and the occasions of its use pointed out, but the charm used when driving monkeys was not recognised. A song sung for amusement by the Veddas beginning *Mamini mamini ma deyo* was immediately recognised, as were two of the invocations of the Kolamaduwa ceremony, but considering how Sinhalese in substance this ceremony is this is perhaps not of much importance.

At the present day the number of Veddas living their natural forest life is necessarily few, for their territory has been gradually encroached upon by the Sinhalese who are inveterate poachers. The Veddas, who were never numerous within recent historic times, are now rapidly dying out, while many have settled among the Sinhalese and so lost their identity. We met with only four families who still led the life described by Bailey in 1863, and these were not among the Nilgala but among the Nuwaragala Hills. At Nilgala itself there are no Veddas at the present day, though the local peasant Sinhalese doubtless have much Vedda blood in their veins. The Henebedda and Danigala Veddas are the descendants of those recorded by Bailey in 1863, and the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are the descendants of those known and described by the old Kandyan who visited us at Bandaraduwa.

Hennebedda. At Hennebedda we met a number of families living together in the Bendiyagalge caves. They had come to this their largest cave, from several settlements all within a few hours' journey. The genealogies show that at least

[1] These ceremonies are described in Chapter IX.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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among the wilder Veddas at the present day. It therefore appears that although beads are worn as ornaments by the members of certain communities in the Bintenne there is no evidence for their use as such among the Veddas to the east of the Badulla-Batticaloa road.

We may next consider certain facts which seem to indicate that beads may be sometimes treated as amulets, or at least as having magical power. At Bandaraduwa where there has been a great deal of Sinhalese influence, one woman wore a piece of knotted string round her throat which had been charmed and put on by a Sinhalese to cure her of some ailment. When we gave her a string of beads she was very pleased and immediately broke the old charmed string and put the beads round her neck in place of it.

At Bendiyagalge all the women were particularly anxious for us to give beads to their children and immediately put these round their necks, but those given to themselves were not usually put on in our presence. In both these cases there is only the suggestion that beads were regarded as anything more than ornaments, and this also holds good as regards the beads of bear's bone worn by Kaira of Bingoda already recorded, but in the following cases the relation of beads to the *yaku* is perfectly clear. The women of Unuwatura Bubula, though they possessed beads of the same kind as those worn by the women of Omuni, were afraid to wear them, and gave them to the shaman to keep and use in *yaku* ceremonies. In this village we found that women would not accept red beads as presents because "they were afraid," though they readily took the white beads offered them, and the shaman when dancing to the Alut Yakini wore cross shoulder straps of old beads, and similar beads were kept for Indigollae Yaka.

There is equally strong evidence of the definite association of beads with the *yaku* in other communities, though the reason for this association could not be determined. At Sitala Wanniya a band of bast was placed upon the offering to the Rahu Yaku, and our informants said that they would have used beads instead of the bast had they possessed them. At the same place when preparing for the dance to Dola Yaka, who gives

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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success in honey gathering, the shaman asked us for two strings of beads. These beads he placed over betel leaves upon two arrows thrust in the centre of the dancing ground which were surrounded by betel leaves offered to the *yaka*. These beads were said to represent the rough rope of creeper with which the green twigs forming the smoker were secured and the rope by which the smoker was lowered to the comb.

When it is remembered that Veddas do not tattoo or paint themselves, and have never been seen wearing any kind of seeds as ornaments, it seems reasonable to assume that where beads are sought after by the Veddas they are valued for their supposed magical properties.

In conclusion we may give the only perfectly clear instance of a Vedda wearing an amulet with which we are acquainted. The shaman of Bandaraduwa wore on his wrist a small silver cylinder such as is commonly used to contain a written charm. The cylinder was empty and had never contained a charm, but the shaman told us that he wore it in order to be cured of an illness from which he had suffered formerly, and that presently he would give the cylinder to some pilgrim proceeding to Kataragam in order that he might deposit it in the temple there.

The Eating of Human Liver.

Every group of Veddas except the most sophisticated village Veddas believe that it was formerly the custom for a man to carry in his betel pouch a small piece of dry human liver. But the majority of our informants were not clear as to the exact reason for doing this, though they were all agreed that it had something to do with raising a man's valour and making him strong to bear trouble. It was essential that the liver should be taken from a man killed by the individual who proposed to carry a portion of the dried liver in his pouch. When a man had been killed the slayer would open his belly and take out a small portion of his liver which he would dry in the sun in a secret place. This custom appears to have ceased about three generations ago, but the following instance, said to have occurred about fifty years ago, was given us at Bandaraduwa.

5: Spittal D-5 (ca. 1929) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

some unfortunate who had trodden on a wriggling thing. We learnt too late that we had over-shot the game *talawas* of Wavinna by four miles. There was nothing for it, but to plough back through the mud at five the following morning, and to return at ten with a fine buck greatly to the joy of our dispirited company.

Veddas were my quest. Wherever I went, whomever I met, my one question was, "Are there any Veddas hereabout?" So far I had no luck.

A tall slouching man, obliging to obsequiousness, was the *aratchi* of Paragahakelle. He it was who first told me, as he escorted us the next morning, that good Veddas were to be found up north at Galmede. Years ago an illness took him there in search of a famous *vedarala** who one day said to him, "Let us go and see the Veddas." He found them in caves, clothed in leaf and beaten bark, grinding *kurrukkan* and maize with fragments of stone. They stank superbly, and averred that if they poured water on their heads they would surely die. But that was twenty years ago. Would we find them so to-day? The Veddas of Galmede became an obsession and a hope.

Reaching Hinimidurawa that evening the *aratchi* also told us that across the field were people who called themselves Veddas. Even as he spoke one of these joined us. Shifting his gaze from our guns to the fresh spoor of an elephant, he said, "That brute will certainly kill us one day; we cannot escape him. All last night he had me up that tree in the *chena*. A few weeks ago he pulled down one of our huts killing a man and his son." He suggested we might hunt the beast.

"Where is he now?" I asked.

"I drove him that way last night," he said, indicating the direction of our proposed camp. This was not reassuring; the ravages of the animal were in evidence everywhere.

We settled down for the night by a stream that intersected the path. Large fires were lit and the men asked leave to sing, for it was not safe to be voiceless in the feeding grounds of so notorious a 'rogue'. Even as the forest echoed to lewd snatches, we heard the challenge. Having arranged for an all-night watch we were soon asleep. I was roused at midnight by a blowing sound quite close to me. The fires had died out and no one was awake! Groping in the dark I tugged at the first human leg I touched, but it was quite a while before its owner awoke, yawned—and grasped the situation. Then for ten minutes the forest rang to an uproar that might have scared a demon. The next morning, traces in the sand revealed the story. Lying as we were full in the path of the elephant, it had come to within ten yards of us on its nightly visit to the *chena*; then, suddenly changing its mind, it had turned away. It was well I woke when I did.

Heenbanda, a Vedda of Hinimidurawa, illustrated, from personal experience, the potency of a charm he gave us: Coming suddenly on a she-bear with cubs, he had shouted his charm as she rushed at him. The animal was hurled back, spread-eagled, as if struck. Recovering, she advanced again, and this time clasped the unfortunate man by the neck with her fore legs, while with her hind paws she ripped his abdomen; marks of which encounter he still carried. Heenbanda's brother who

*Native physician.

5: Spitzel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5
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V 751 accompanied him, now struck the bear with his axe and, when she turned on him, killed her. So much for charms; excellent things—provided a weapon is in your hands. "Trust in God," says the Arabic proverb, "but fasten thy camel securely."

G 361 Uhana was a surprise; the place gave every promise of being in a few years a flourishing settlement, thanks to Government grants of land, cattle and grain on easy terms. Luck at last! Near Uhana was a gipsy camp. Wadinagala gave us first promise of these people; but like a mirage they had faded from stage to stage of our journey, leaving only their camp refuse to mock us. Now, here they were, within two miles of us. We stayed over the next morning that we might visit them. As we neared their encampment we met a man who told us that he had passed them on their way to another camp. They who had been here for weeks must needs pack and begone within an hour of our visit! They were bound, the man said, for a place a mile and a half away. We followed, but did not find them there; instead, was another tantalizer who assured us that we would find them on a knoll by a stream a mile and a half beyond. We proceeded, painfully aware that every step of our way must be retraced in the broiling sun before we could earn our lunch. Disappointment again! Almost tearful with frustration and fatigue, we had thrown ourselves down, when a kindly individual came to our aid.

"Rest here," he said. "I shall go forward and see. Come if you hear me 'hoo.' I can tell of their presence some distance away by the crowing of their cocks and the clatter of their camp." We waited and were rewarded.

G [492] [230] [343] On an undulant opening, reminiscent of Somerset pastures, we found the gipsies. They had just unloaded their pack-bulls and were setting up camp under the blazing sky of noon, disdainful of the shelter of the cool environing jungle—the very antithesis of Vedda ways. Cattle and fowls flecked the glade; boys led goats into the forest. Women, graceful as Dianas, were erecting talipot shelters over collected household goods and communal stacks of grain. Tall men, lithe and sinewy as greyhounds, with mongrels at their heels, carried naked babes. Children, reading favour in our faces, essayed shrill nasal choruses clapping arms to chest. The chief, a quietly curious, grizzled man, with a care-free air bred of the freedom and independence of his life, held in play a vicious cobra just captured. He summed the gipsy life in a sentiment savouring of Borrow: "What are we?" he said. "Children of the open ways, bronzed by the sun, soaked by the rain, born on the trail, buried on the trail. That is our life." They had a sambur spear among them, and apparently only one man adept in its use; but that spear, their little dogs and their own untiring sinews were match enough for any sambur once started.

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V 361 From Uhane to Kotelinda by way of hill-girdled Bokkebedda in the drenching rain. Here, at a glance, we noticed crude little Vedda huts amidst those of the Sinhalese villagers. We were now among the hills of Madana long famed for Veddas; but to-day their caves are only tenanted by bears. Up to now we had traversed a stretch of country designated on the maps Maha-Veddi-Ratta (Great Vedda Country)—an empty name of about as much significance at the present time as the term Cinnamon Gardens applied to Colombo. Kotelinda lies in the centre of a region that is to-day the last stronghold of the Veddas—that

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